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WHAT IS CLAIMED IS:

1. A drilling fluid or mud comprising at least one alkali metal formate or monovalent carboxylic salt.
2. A drilling fluid comprising at least one alkali metal formate and at least one
5 emulsifier.
3. The completion fluid of claim 2, further comprising at least one hydrocarbon-based fluid or synthetic mud fluid.
4. The drilling fluid of claim 2, wherein said alkali metal formate comprises potassium formate.
- 10 5. The drilling fluid of claim 2, wherein said drilling fluid further comprises at least one acid.
6. The drilling fluid of claim 2, further comprising at least one solid weighting material, at least one fluid loss additive, at least one wetting agent, at least one organo clay, at least one filtration control agent, at least one polymer, or combinations thereof.
- 15 7. The drilling fluid of claim 2, wherein said emulsifier comprises a dimer trimer acid, imadazoline, tall oil, or combinations thereof.
8. The drilling fluid of claim 3, wherein said hydrocarbon-based fluid comprises diesel oil.
9. The drilling fluid of claim 3, wherein said hydrocarbon-based fluid comprises at
20 least one synthetic oil.
10. The drilling fluid of claim 5, wherein said acid is formic acid or an acid derivative thereof.

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11. The drilling fluid of claim 1, wherein said alkali metal formate is less than fully saturated in said drilling fluid.

12. A method to drill a well comprising drilling said well in the presence of the drilling fluid of claim 1.

5 13. A method to drill a well comprising drilling said well in the presence of the drilling fluid of claim 2.

14. A method to reduce the solids content in a drilling fluid comprising substituting at least a portion of said solid weighting material with an aqueous solution comprising at least one alkali metal formate.

10 15. A drilling fluid or mud made by mixing at least one alkali metal formate and at least one emulsifier.

16. A drilling fluid or mud made by mixing at least one alkali metal formate, at least one emulsifier, at least one hydrocarbon-based fluid or synthetic mud fluid.